



MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION

PO Box 1370

Jefferson City, MO 65102

www.mec.mo.gov

(573) 751-2020 / (800) 392-8660

James Klahr
Executive Director

March 8, 2018

Mary Nichols
Friends of Mary Nichols
11610 Mack Ave
Maryland Heights MO 63043

Re: File No. 18-0001-I

Dear Ms. Nichols:

The Missouri Ethics Commission considered the complaints filed against you and Friends of Mary Nichols at its March 7, 2018 meeting.¹ The related complaints alleged your candidate committee, Friends of Mary Nichols, paid for publication and distribution of newsletters mailed to residents of Maryland Heights between November 2017 and January 2018. The newsletters highlighted certain issues in the City of Maryland Heights. The complaint alleges the newsletter promotes your husband, Bob Nichols, for some future, undisclosed office. The complaint alleges that the newsletters are effectively an in-kind contribution to Bob Nichols which has not been reported and that the committee's expenditure of funds for the newsletter is an unauthorized use of committee funds.

Staff reviewed the allegation, relevant facts, and applicable law. Bob Nichols was elected to the Maryland Heights Fire Protection District Board in April 2017. He is currently serving a 6 year term on that board. While he maintained a candidate committee before the April 2017 election, he terminated his committee, Committee to Re-Elect Bob Nichols, shortly after the election. He is not currently seeking elected office and is not a candidate at this time. Therefore, Friends of Mary Nichols did not make an in-kind contribution to Bob Nichols when it paid for the newsletters sent to city residents starting in November 2017, months after Bob Nichols terminated his candidate committee.²

Staff also reviewed whether Friends for Mary Nichols was authorized to spend committee funds for the purpose of publishing and distributing the newsletter. Section 130.034, RSMo, sets out the types of authorized committee expenditures and includes ordinary expenses related to a campaign (Sec. 130.034.2(1)). You are currently a candidate for mayor and the newsletter highlights city issues that relate to the city and the office of mayor.

¹ While the Commission received 2 separate complaints, the complaints were substantially similar and the Commission considered them together.

² One of the newsletters highlights the fact that Bob Nichols is a retired police captain from Maryland Heights and has undertaken an investigation into city business, presumably to lend credibility to the content of the newsletter. But there is no reference to Bob Nichols as either a candidate nor as a current board member on the fire protection board.



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From the facts presented, the Commission finds no reasonable grounds exist to support a violation of Chapter 130, RSMo, and is dismissing the complaint.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James Klahr".

James Klahr
Executive Director

Enclosure